

## **The President's News Conference**

*August 13, 2020*

*The President.* Hello, everyone. Thank you very much. It was just announced by Attorney General Barr that they've caught the killer of LeGend Taliferro—horribly shot—a young man, wonderful young man. And we have just—this just came out 2 minutes ago. So Attorney General Barr just announced.

As you know, we named Operation LeGend after LeGend Taliferro, where we're going to be helping out, and are in the process of helping out, cities throughout our country that have difficulty with crime, in particular, certain types of crime. So that's really good news. They caught the killer of LeGend.

Today we saw Joe Biden continue to politicize a pandemic and to show his appalling lack of respect for the American people. That's what it is. At every turn, Biden has been wrong about the virus, ignoring the scientific evidence and putting left-wing politics before facts and evidence.

Sleepy Joe opposed both the China and the Europe travel bans. You know that. He opposed the China travel ban that I instituted very early and the Europe travel ban that I instituted quite early. If he had followed—if we went after—I listened to his advice, hundreds of thousands more people would have died. This is according to many people. I believe that Dr. Fauci agreed with that. He said that President Trump made a great decision when he put the ban on China.

Joe Biden wants to fling open American borders, allowing the pandemic to infiltrate every U.S. community based on his policies. He wants to have ridiculous open borders. I've been saying from the first day I started campaigning for this great office that, you have open borders, you don't have a country. You don't have a country, with open borders. So he wants open borders. The Democrats want open borders.

And if you take a look at our southern border, we would have criminals pouring through. The wall is getting close to 290 miles long, and it's having a huge impact. So we disagree with him on that. That's one of the many different—many things that we disagree with.

But while Joe Biden would allow rioters and looters and criminals and millions of illegal aliens to roam free in our country, he wants the Federal Government to issue a sweeping new mandate to law-abiding citizens.

He wants the President of the United States, with the mere stroke of a pen, to order over 300 million American citizens to wear a mask for a minimum of 3 straight months—I guess this just happened; he thinks it's good politics, I guess—no matter where they live and no matter their surroundings. Because different States are much different, both in terms of the atmosphere itself and also in terms of the corona problem.

He does not identify what authority the President has to issue such a mandate or how Federal law enforcement could possibly enforce it or why we would be stepping on Governors throughout our country, many of whom have done a very good job, and they know what is needed.

Also, many of our 50 States are doing the job at a level that frankly, people are really surprised, including foreign governments that are calling us constantly and asking for advice. So I want to just say our Governors have worked very hard. They've worked with Vice President Pence and myself and everybody else that's been going.

We have Scott now involved. And so, Scott, congratulations. You'll be working with a lot of Governors; you've already started. And Dr. Fauci and Dr. Birx.

If the President has the unilateral power to order every single citizen to cover their face in nearly all instances, what other powers does he have? That's why he refused—Biden—to take questions. He couldn't answer any of them. Couldn't answer the questions. He refuses to take questions. He never takes questions. I take questions; he never takes questions. And you sort of wonder what's going on, because they're not that difficult. Some can be nasty, but they're not that difficult. But he never takes questions. So he just, I guess, left. I didn't see it, but I guess he just left the podium. Put it in your minds.

My administration has a different approach: We have urged Americans to wear masks. And I emphasized, this is a patriotic thing to do. Maybe they're great, and maybe they're just good. Maybe they're not so good. But frankly, what do you have to lose? You have nothing to lose. So we do, and we've been saying wear them when it's appropriate, especially in terms of social distancing, if you can't distance enough. And what do you have to lose?

But again, it's up to the Governors. And we want to have a certain freedom. And we want to have a certain freedom. That's what we're about. At the same time, we also understand that each State is different and is facing unique circumstances. You have very, very different States facing very unique differences and circumstances.

We've entrusted the Governors of each State, elected by the people, to develop and enforce their own mask policies and other policies, following guidance from the Federal Government and CDC. We're working with each State to implement a plan based on the facts and science. We will continue to urge Americans to wear masks when they cannot socially distance, but we do not need to bring the full weight of the Federal Government down on law-abiding Americans to accomplish this goal.

Americans must have their freedoms. And I trust the American people and their Governors very much. I trust the American people. And the Governors want to do the right thing to make the smart decisions, and Joe doesn't. Joe doesn't. Joe doesn't know too much.

Unlike the Biden approach, our approach is guided by science. That's why we're focused on protecting the high-risk Americans. That is why we're delivering effective medical treatments to dramatically reduce the fatality rate. And that is why we're developing a vaccine and therapeutics in record time. You'll see that, I think, very soon.

Sleepy Joe rejects the scientific approach in favor of locking all Americans in their basements for months on end, which I think is something that Scott would be very opposed to. I think I can speak for you. We've been dealing pretty strongly over the last number of weeks. But he wants them in the basement for months on end.

And you have Governors that have been very, very strict on keeping people in their houses, keeping people in their—wherever they may be—apartments. And frankly, I don't think the results are necessarily better than other results. But he wants to shut down our economy, close our schools, and grind society to a halt. And he wants it done by a Federal decree. This would lead to a crippling, long-lasting depression. This would be a crippling, long-lasting depression.

And yesterday I showed you the numbers about how well we're doing coming back with auto sales and auto manufacturing and used car sales and housing sales at numbers that nobody would have believed. And we're back and very strong. It's a very strong "V." It's almost a straight-up "V." We'll be discussing that over the next couple of days.

But the economy is coming back, and the employment numbers over the last 3 months are a record in history of our country. And we'll be back next year. I think we'll be maybe even

stronger than the previous years, where we set every record in the book: unemployment and stock market.

By the way, our stock market numbers are very close to record. And NASDAQ is actually a record over the last 14 days. Fourteen—for 14 times now, it's been record. And that's during what we hope will be the more final stages of the pandemic.

So if we did what Biden wanted to do, it would shut down our health care system and lead to a massive increase in mortality, including suicide, overdose, heart disease, and countless other physical and mental harms. It is very, very bad on the other side of the equation, when you do something like that. Those shutdowns are very punitive. Very punitive. They hurt a lot of people in a lot of different ways through depression, through suicide, through so many other things: alcohol, drugs.

Biden's approach is regressive, it's antiscientific, and it's very defeatist. It would be very bad for our country. While Joe Biden has been playing politics from the sidelines—he has no clue—we've been solving problems and delivering tremendous results; the most advanced and robust testing system on the planet; the number-one producer of ventilators in the world, by far; unprecedented industrial mobilization—biggest since World War II—Operation Warp Speed to deliver lifesaving treatments and, very soon, a vaccine.

What a plan by Joe Biden has actually laid out would do, we've really, already, accomplished. In fact, many of the things that was well reported over the last few days—every single thing he said to do, every single thing we did, and we did them well. So Biden has no idea on his own. He only knows what he thinks we should do, and he spews it out, and then he—I guess you could say he "plagiarizes," and he really did in our case, because every single one of the events—I think, Kayleigh, we can say that—was something we had already done.

So we'll defeat the virus, but not by hiding in our basements. He's got to come out of his basement. We'll defeat this virus through a commonsense mitigation effort, shielding those at highest risk, and unleashing America's medical and scientific genius, which is what it is. And we've already been doing it, and we're very close to having something that's going to be very, very special in the form of therapeutics and vaccines.

To Joe, I would say: Stop playing politics with a virus. Too serious. Partisan politics has no place here. It's a shameful situation for anybody to try and score political points while we're working to save lives and defeat the pandemic.

In times of national challenge, America has—and Americans—and we are—by the way, we are working with countries from all over the world, and they're trying to learn from us. And some of the countries that you spoke most well about are having a tremendous surge right now. But it will work out. But Americans must unite together, and they must put politics aside and have to really unite for a common good.

Three vaccines are in the final stage of clinical trials. They're doing really well. We're producing the most promising vaccine candidates in advance, as you know, part of the largest industrialization ever. It's incredible, when I meet with heads of companies that are doing this—that are the best companies anywhere in the world—it's incredible where they are, how they're doing, and the speed with which they're doing it, and also the speed with which the FDA is approving things, because by any other standard, you would have been 2 or 3 years away from being at the point that we're at.

By the end of this week, we will have shipped 1,846 rapid point-of-care testing devices to nursing homes, which are a very important source, as you know, for people that are not handling the plague from China very well. This week alone, we're sending 992 testing devices and 450,000

tests to more than 950 nursing homes across the country. And these tests are incredible. These are tests that are all new, very modern.

And we're also getting on—the tests that are not done immediately, with the 5- to 15-minute timing, when they do send them to a lab, they're coming back now in 3 days. So it's a 3-day process, which is about as good as you can do. You have 1 day of delivering, 1 day of receiving, and 1 day in the lab. We're also requiring all nursing homes to test all members of their staff at least weekly.

By unleashing America's scientific genius, we have delivered effective treatments. The case fatality rate for Americans over 70 has declined by about 85 percent. That's a fantastic number. It's declined. That's case fatality. It's declined by 85 percent.

Europe has seen 40-percent more excess mortality than the United States compared to a nonpandemic year. So you hear the numbers, and those numbers are very interesting, but that's the way it is.

We continue to urge all Americans to wash your hands, socially distance, wear a mask when necessary and when you cannot distance, and protect—very importantly—the vulnerable. Protect people that are older and especially people that have problems with heart or diabetes or some other problem.

Earlier today very exciting news—very big news all over the world; they're talking about it all over the world; it was amazing—we finalized a historic peace agreement between Israel and the United Arab Emirates. After half a century, Israel and the United Arab Emirates will fully normalize their diplomatic relations. Nobody thought this was something that could happen for a long time. This is the most important diplomatic breakthrough since the Egypt-Israel peace agreement; it was signed over 40 years ago.

We have Ambassador to Israel David Friedman here. Thank you, David, for being here. We very much—you would agree that this was a big day for Israel and a big day for the world?

*U.S. Ambassador to Israel David M. Friedman.* You're right.

*The President.* Good. Thank you, David. You've been fantastic too. Fantastic Ambassador and representative of our country. Thank you very much.

The deal that was reached today will enable Muslims to have far greater ability to visit many historic sites in Israel and to peacefully pray at the Al-Aqsa Mosque, which is very important to them, which they've wanted to have access to for many, many decades.

This is a monumental step to forging ties of cooperation in the Middle East. And I think you're going to have other countries come forward. I can tell you we already do, and they want to make a deal. They're going to have peace in the Middle East. It will be fantastic.

Israel is also suspending settlements in the West Bank, which is a big deal, a bold step toward achieving peace. Israel and the United Arab Emirates have also agreed to immediately expand and accelerate scientific collaboration to develop effective treatments and vaccines to defeat the China virus—they've both been hit; virtually, every country has been hit, 188 countries—and to save lives in their region and in their world. So they are working very much on the vaccines, also with us. And, again, some very good news is going to take place with respect to that.

Our unprecedented diplomatic engagements laid the groundwork for this historic peace agreement, which was just announced a little while ago, today.

We will not rest as we continue to work toward a world of greater harmony and prosperity for all. I want to thank Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel and Crown Prince

Mohammed bin Zayed of the United Arab Emirates—two fantastic people—for their vision and their leadership. And I look forward to hosting them at the White House very soon to formally sign the agreement. We'll probably be doing it over the next, I would say, 3 weeks. And they'll be coming to Washington.

So that was a tremendous day. That was a tremendous thing that happened. And it's a great sign. We have a lot of other interesting things going on with other nations, also having to do with peace agreements. And a lot of big news is coming over the next few weeks, and I'm sure you'll be very impressed. And more importantly, it's a great thing for our country, a great thing for the world. So thank you very much.

Please, go ahead.

### *School Reopening Efforts*

*Q.* Thank you, Mr. President. I appreciate it. I want to ask you about school-aged kids and food. One of the real problems when you shut down the schools: These are kids on reduced and free lunch programs; they need these meals to make it through their day. And with districts shutting down school, what, if anything, can the Federal Government do to make sure that the kids still get decent meals, as long as the schools are out?

*The President.* Well, you know we don't want the schools shut down. We want the schools to open. And especially very young children handle it—children, all children—but especially very young children handle it very well. So we want schools open. We don't want to be in that position. We want schools open. We've made payment. And we would, frankly, if the school isn't going to open, we would much rather follow the child with the payment——

*Q.* Right.

*The President.* ——give the money to the child, meaning the parents of the child, and let that—let the parents do what they have to do, including bringing the child to another school, because we're finding that whether it's parents or children, people want to get back to school. They want to have their life back.

Some people say they don't want—the Democrats don't want schools open, because that's where you have a lot of polling booths. And if you have a school closed, you can't very easily have polling booths at the school. And that's becoming—I think maybe we'll be able to show that as fact, but that's another thing that they're doing to try and keep people away from the polls. So we have to look into that, but it's—you've been reading about it, I've been reading about it, and I don't like it.

But we'd like to see the schools open. Then, we don't have that problem.

Good question.

*Q.* Mr. President——

*The President.* Thank you. Please, Steve [Steve A. Holland, Reuters].

### *Arab-Israeli Peace Process*

*Q.* Mr. President, what's your understanding of how long Israel will suspend this West Bank annexation plan?

*The President.* What do you think? Tell me.

*Ambassador Friedman.* Well, we have—we're putting all our eggs into the basket of peace. We have an agreement with the Emirates. We're going to nail down all the details—Embassies, overflights, commercial—and then we're going to extrapolate that to the rest of the region. How

long that takes, I can't tell you. But that's—we've prioritized peace over the sovereignty movement, but it's not off the table. It's just something that will be deferred until the—we give peace every single chance.

*Q.* And to follow up, what do you want the Palestinians to take away from this deal, since they're not really a party to it?

*The President.* Well, but they are supported largely by some of the countries that we're talking to and that have already signed—you know, in the case of the one country. But others will be following. And I think the Palestinians will—without saying it necessarily yet, I think they very much want to be a part of what we're doing. And I see, ultimately, the Palestinians—I see peace between Israel and the Palestinians. I see that happening. I think as these very big, powerful, wealthy countries come in, I think the Palestinians will follow, quite naturally.

Yes, please.

#### *Israel-United Araba Emirates Relations*

*Q.* Do you believe that a deal could have been reached without Israel's agreement to temporarily suspend annexation?

*The President.* Say it again. Could you make it louder?

*Q.* Do you believe that a deal could have been reached without Israel's agreement to temporarily suspend annexation?

*The President.* What do you think about that, David? It's interesting.

*Ambassador Friedman.* I think you can't do both at the same time. So I think, again, prioritize peace. Sovereignty after peace is given; every opportunity to return to sovereignty. I don't think the two could have been done at the same time.

*Q.* And have you asked Israel to permanently consider abandoning annexation——

*Ambassador Friedman.* No, this is a temporary process. There's been no request.

*The President.* Okay? Please, Kaitlan [Kaitlan Collins, CNN].

#### *U.S. Postal Service/Vote-by-Mail Policies/Economic Stimulus Legislation*

*Q.* Thank you, Mr. President. This morning you said that you do not want to fund the U.S. Postal Service because Democrats are trying to expand voting by mail. So I've got two questions for you. One, are you threatening to veto any legislation that includes funding for the Post Office?

*The President.* No, not at all. No.

*Q.* So you would sign something that does include funding?

*The President.* Sure. A separate thing, I would do it. But one of the reasons the Post Office needs that much money is they have all of these millions of ballots coming in from nowhere, and nobody knows from where and where they're going. You saw what happened in—Kaitlan—in Virginia. It was, you know, 500,000 applications coming in, going all over the State; nobody even knows where they came from. You saw what happened in New York, which was a disaster with Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney. It was a basic disaster. And you see Paterson, New Jersey, what's going on there. And we can give you many other locations and sites.

What has happened is that's part of a big negotiation. That's a—actually small part of a big negotiation to get more money to people that it wasn't their fault; it was China's fault. And Post Office is part of it. Another part of it is, they want \$3½ billion just for the ballots themselves. Why it's so much, I don't know. But that's what the Democrats want.

But if the bill isn't going to get done, that would mean the Post Office isn't going to get funded, and that would also mean that the \$3½ billion dollars isn't going to be taken care of. So I don't know how you can possibly use these ballots, these mail-in ballots.

Absentee ballots, by the way, are fine. But the universal mail-ins that are just sent all over the place, where people can grab them and grab stacks of them and sign them and do whatever you want, that's the thing we're against.

*Q.* But isn't that precisely the problem, is that you're saying you do not want to give this Post Office funding in this coronavirus legislation? They say they need it so they can be prepared; so if the pandemic is still going on in November when the election happens and people don't feel safe to go vote in person, they can vote by mail, and it can be safe, and it can be secure.

*The President.* I can understand the Post Office. And if we could agree to a bill—the overall bill, which is obviously a much bigger number than just the Post Office—that would be fine. But they have the Post Office as one of their requests. It's their request.

*Q.* Right. But this morning you said you were against it, didn't you?

*The President.* I'm only against—what I'm against is, I'm against doing anything where the people aren't taken care of, and the people aren't being taken care of properly. We have—we want people to get money. It wasn't their fault that they got shut down. They got shut down by China.

So whether it's the Post Office or whether it's the \$3½ billion dollars—you know, they're asking for \$3½ billion dollars just for the universal mail-in ballots, but they're not willing to make a deal. These are two points within a very big deal.

The thing they want more than anything else, Kaitlan—and you know this—is bailout money for the States and for the cities that are in trouble, which, for the most part, are Democrat-run States and cities. So New York has a problem, California has a problem, Illinois has a tremendous problem, and others. They want to be able to bail out these States, and we don't want to be doing that or certainly don't want to do it to the extent. They're looking for \$1 trillion; we don't want to be doing that.

*Q.* But this morning—I'm just——

*The President.* Please go ahead.

#### *Potential Voter Fraud Risks/2020 Presidential Election*

*Q.* I'm just really confused, because this morning you said they need that money in order to make the Post Office work so it can take all these millions and millions of ballots, and you said that would be "fraudulent." So it sounded like you said you're blocking——

*The President.* No, no. No, no. I said it will end up being fraudulent, because if you look at what's happened over the last few weeks—just look at the few instances where this has happened—it's turned out to be fraudulent.

*Q.* There's no widespread evidence of fraud though.

*The President.* Well, if you look at New York, it was fraudulent; if you look at Paterson, New Jersey, it was fraudulent.

*Q.* There's no evidence of fraud.

*The President.* Of course, there is. The whole thing is a mess. In fact, Carolyn Maloney's opponent is—he's gone crazed. He said they took the election away from him, and he may be right. I think they should redo that election.

And if you look at Virginia, it's terrible. Look at some of the things that have happened in California. Look at California, where they found a million noneligible voters. That was done by Judicial Watch—Tom Fitton and Judicial Watch.

We have to have an honest election. And if it's not going to be an honest election, I guess people have to sit down and think really long and hard about it. But if the Post Office——

*Q.* What do you mean by that?

*The President.* ——if they're not going to approve a bill and the Post Office, therefore, won't have the money, and if they're not going to approve a big bill, a bigger bill, and they're not going to have the \$3½ billion dollars for the universal mail-in votes, how can you have those votes?

What it would mean is, the people will have to go to the polls and vote, like the old days—like 2 years ago, 3 years ago, 4 years ago. They have to go to the—it doesn't say anybody is taking the vote away, but it means that the universal mail-ins don't work. Absentees do work. It's a very different thing—an absentee—where you make an application, and you send it in, they send you a vote. It's different.

But—so, Kaitlan, I'm not saying anything wrong with voting. I want them to vote. But that would mean that they'd have to go to a voting booth, like they used to, and vote.

*Q.* Even if they don't feel safe voting in person? People want to vote by mail because of the pandemic.

*The President.* Well, they're going to have to feel safe, and they will be safe, and we will make sure that they're safe. And we're not going to have to spend \$3½ billion dollars to do it.

And when you go to a voting—it would be wonderful if we had voting ID. And some States have that, and some States don't because they can't get it passed. Most States want it. But we want people to vote. We want people to vote so when they vote, it means one vote; it doesn't mean ballots all over the place.

You saw what would—what was happening in Virginia, where piles of ballot applications are dropped all over the State. They had them named after dogs. They had them named after dead people. We want to have an accurate vote. I'm not doing this for any reason. Maybe the other turns out to be my advantage, I don't know. I can't tell you that.

But I do know this: I just want an accurate vote—and it's a fair question, by the way—and so does everybody else.

*Q.* Just to follow up——

*The President.* Yes, in the back.

### *Treatment of Christians in the Middle East*

*Q.* Mr. President, how does the accord today between Israel and the U.A.E. help struggling and persecuted Christians in the Middle East?

*The President.* Help what?

*Q.* How does it help struggling and persecuted Christians in the Middle East, the deal today?

*The President.* Well, I think it's going to. I think it's a big start. And you're right about that: Christians have been persecuted by some countries in particular in the Middle East. And I think this is a big start. It's going to be a very strong start, very powerful start, and it's something that I will tell you—I've told David, and I've told every one of our negotiators: If you look at the way Christians have been treated in some countries, it's beyond disgraceful. It's—if I had information and if I had absolute proof—some of the stories that we've heard, which are not easy, which is not



easy to get—I would go in and do a number to those countries like you wouldn't believe. What they do to Christians in the Middle East—and it's disgraceful. It's disgraceful. You're right.

It's a very big part of the overall negotiation. And as countries come in—for instance, U.A.E. has agreed very strongly to represent us; I think they will very well with respect to Christianity, because in the Middle East, it's not treated well. It's not treated well at all. It's treated horribly and very unfairly, and it's criminal what's happened, and that's for many, many years.

I think it's a great question and very—it's a very unfair situation.

Please, go ahead.

### *TikTok/China-U.S. Trade*

*Q.* Thank you, Mr. President. Larry Kudlow said that there's a routine check-in call with China on the phase one trade deal. My question is: What if they bring up TikTok and also WeChat? Would you engage—would you instruct your team to engage them on that Executive order you just signed?

*The President.* No, we have a deadline of September 15. And whether it's Microsoft, I understand—and others are negotiating—we also said that, obviously, it's worthless if we don't allow them into the country, so we said that the United States Treasury is going to be getting something out of this deal—something very substantial.

But what we want is total security, but we have a deadline of September 15. So I know Microsoft and others are very interested in it, but that's our deadline. And it has to be proven to be totally secure. We don't want to have any information going into China with what we've been through.

And I have to tell you—you talk about the deal—you mentioned the phase one deal. Well, the phase one deal, it's a very interesting situation because you've been hearing, "the largest order of corn in history," "the largest order of soybeans," "the largest order of beef." They've done more than they've ever done.

So you're going to have to figure that one out. With where I'm coming from, I could have—because they see my attitude. My attitude toward China is not friendly. But they have gone into orders that are extremely large, extremely large, and our farmers are very happy.

But with what they did with respect to the pandemic, the plague that came in from China, it just is a different feeling. It's an incredible deal, but I have a very different feeling.

*Q.* So you are——

*The President.* But they are giving—they are giving the Midwest, our farmers, among the largest orders they've ever seen. Somebody told me today—Bob Lighthizer said about 40 percent of the—of what they're selling now is going to China. So maybe they're trying to make me change my mind a little bit, because you know my attitude on China, and it's not—it hasn't been very good.

*Q.* But you're willing to—[inaudible]—TikTok with them in these negotiations?

*The President.* Well, we're not talking to them. No, we're talking to the companies. In theory, it's a company, but it's a company within China. That means China. And the deal will have to be substantially beneficial to the United States, and we need total security. Okay?

*Q.* Mr. President——

*Q.* Mr. President——

*The President.* Go ahead, please.

### *Israel's Proposed Annexation of West Bank Territories*

*Q.* Mr. President, can you say whether you yourself think that annexation should be off the table for Israel? And if so, have you communicated that to the Prime Minister?

*The President.* Well, not off the table. No. It's something they've discussed, but Israel has agreed not to do that. I mean, more than just off the table, they have agreed not to do it. And I think that was very important, and I think it was a great concession by Israel, and I think it was a very smart concession by Israel.

But, David, do you have anything further to add on that?

*Q.* The Prime Minister was pretty clear today at his own press conference that he considers this to be a temporary suspension and that the deal would still be open to him at some point in the future. I'm asking what you think he should do. Should he actually write it off?

*The President.* No, right now all I can say: It's off the table. So I can't talk about some time into the future; that's a big statement. But right now it's off the table. Is that a correct statement, Mr. Ambassador?

*Ambassador Friedman.* Yes. The word "suspend" was chosen carefully by all the parties. "Suspend," by definition—look it up—that means "temporary halt." It's off the table now, but it's not off the table permanently.

*The President.* Go ahead.

### *U.S. Postal Service/Economic Stimulus Legislation/Vote-by-Mail Policies*

*Q.* Mr. President, thank you so much. Just to follow on some of the questions that Kaitlan was asking. You said you do want an accurate vote.

*The President.* That's right.

*Q.* Would you direct the Postmaster General to reverse some of the policies changes——

*The President.* No, not at all.

*Q.* ——that have occurred there, in order to prevent delays?

*The President.* No, I wouldn't do that at all. No, I want the Post Office to run properly. But—which makes sense, they would need a lot more money if they're going to be taking in tens of millions of ballots that just come out of the sky from nowhere. And so they need additional financial help.

It's a part of the bill that the Democrats don't want to make, because they want a trillion—much bigger part of the bill—they want a trillion dollars to go to States that are run by Governors, who happen to be Democrats, who have not done a good job for many, many years. And those are States that owe a lot of money and need a lot of money, and they're talking about \$1 trillion.

So the Post Office and the \$3½ billion dollars for the votes themselves, which sounds like a lot of money they're looking for—\$3½ billion dollars. Think of that: \$3½ billion to have mail-in ballots.

Again, absentee, good; universal mail-in, very bad.

Please. Go ahead.

*Q.* Just taking a step back, one quick follow-up. Given that the negotiations are still ongoing about whether to get more money to the Postal Service, why not put more resources and more money, yourself—find a way to do that to make sure there is a free and fair election?

*The President.* Well, they can do it very easily. All they have to do is make a deal. If they make a deal, the Postal Service is taken care of, the money they need for the mail-in ballots would be taken care of—if we agree to it. That doesn't mean we're going to agree to it. But all they have to do is make a deal.

But again, more important to them is not that. That's a lot of money, but it's small time compared to the other. What they want to do—and very, very, very strongly what they want to do is bail out cities that are run by Democrats and have been for many years. And these cities and States have done very badly, and they desperately need money for that.

And we're open to something, but we're not open to the kind of money that they need.

Go ahead, please.

*Q.* My question for you is just, Mr. President——

*Q.* Mr. President, 3½ years, sir——

*Q.* Very quickly, my question for you is just what are you doing——

*Q.* Three and a half years——

*The President.* Just 1 second. Please, go ahead.

*Q.* What are you doing as President to make sure there is a free and fair election?

*The President.* That do what?

### *Election Security*

*Q.* What are you doing, as President, to make sure there is a free and fair election?

*The President.* So, everyone talks about "Russia, Russia, Russia." They talk about "China, China." They talk about all of these different countries that come in and run our elections, which is false.

But what they do—what they don't talk about are things like very loose mail-in ballots, universal in nature, that, frankly, Russia, China, North Korea, Iran—all of these countries that we are reading about, hearing about, and, in some cases, they're writing about, intelligence-wise—these countries can grab those ballots or print forgeries of those ballots, and they would go out, and they would have a field day.

This is the easiest way for—the mail-in ballots is the easiest way for a country like a China or Russia or a North Korea or Iran—I hear Iran too. You know, that was part of the report. This would be very easy for them. This is much easier than——

*Q.* What are you doing to make sure it's free and fair?

*The President.* Well, we have been very strong. Now, if you remember, President Obama was informed about Russia by the FBI in September. The election was in November. President Obama decided to do absolutely nothing about it. People don't mention that very much anymore. That's a lost fact. But he was informed very powerfully that they're going to do—and President Obama did nothing. We have done a lot, and we've really shored it up.

But what people can never prepare for are millions and millions of mail-in ballots. Because they can be forged. They can be captured. They can be taken.

*Q.* There's no evidence of that, so——

*The President.* No, that's a very hard thing to do. We have to make sure that we can do that. Please.

*Q.* Sir, Mr. President, after 3½ years, do you regret, at all, all the lying you've done to the American people on everything?

*The President.* All the what?

*Q.* All the lying. All the dishonesties.

*The President.* That who has done?

*Q.* You have done. Tens of thousands——

*The President.* Yes, go ahead. Please. Please.

Go ahead.

### *Payroll Tax Cut*

*Q.* I wanted to ask about the payroll tax cut.

*The President.* Go ahead.

*Q.* One, is it going to be optional or mandatory for employers to defer and not collect the payroll tax?

*The President.* So we'll——

*Q.* And I have a follow-up on that.

*The President.* The payroll tax is very important and a very big benefit to people; as you know, to companies, because we want the companies to be strong—but now, directly to people. And it's a very big number. And we're taking care of it. And we—this will go directly to the people, to workers within the company. It's a payroll tax. It's called a payroll tax cut. We're cutting the payroll tax. And it's a very large number, and that will go directly to the workers of the company.

*Q.* But will the—if employers collect that through FICA, will that be—are they going to be required not to collect that money? Or is it——

*The President.* The—you mean later on? You mean later on, at a later date?

*Q.* Well, right now. So on September 1, when I get my paycheck, will it be up to my——

*The President.* The employers—the employers will collect it and give it, most likely. The employers will collect it and give it. Okay?

*Q.* But can I ask a follow-up on that?

*The President.* Please, go ahead.

*Q.* Mr. President, I have two questions. The first one on domestic politics. There are claims——

*The President.* Can't—can't understand a word you're saying.

### *Democratic Vice President Candidate Senator Kamala D. Harris*

*Q.* There are claims circulating on social media that Kamala Harris is not eligible to be—to run for Vice President because she was an "anchor baby," I quote. Do you or can you definitively say whether or not Kamala Harris is eligible—legal—and meets the legal requirements to run as Vice President?

*The President.* So I just heard that. I heard it today that she doesn't meet the requirements. And by the way, the lawyer that wrote that piece is a very highly qualified, very talented lawyer. I

have no idea if that's right. I would have—I would have assumed the Democrats would have checked that out before she gets chosen to run for Vice President.

*Q. [Inaudible]*

*The President.* But that's a very serious—you're saying that—they're saying that she doesn't qualify because she wasn't born in this country?

*Q.* She was.

*Q.* No, she was born in this country, but her parents did not—the claims say that her parents did not receive their permanent residence at that time.

*The President.* Yes, I don't know about it. I just heard about it. I'll take a look.

Back in the back, please.

#### *United Nations General Assembly*

*Q.* Okay. Mr. President, a follow-up on UNGA. Ambassador Kelly Craft recently said that you—or she's hoping that you might be able to deliver the speech in front of the U.N. General Assembly in person, even though other leaders will be sending in their video recordings. Can you confirm that?

*The President.* Yes, I'm thinking about going directly to the U.N. to do the speech. A lot of people will not, because of COVID—will not be able to be there, as you know. But I'm thinking—I think it's appropriate. If we can do it, I'll do it directly. And again, this will not be like in the past, because some countries won't be able to escape the problems they're having. You know, countries are having a tremendous problem with the China virus. So we'll see what happens.

But I would prefer doing it. I can do it the other way. I can do it "viral," as they say. I can do it in that form. But I'd rather be at the United Nations—deliver it.

*Q.* Would you do it if the room was empty?

*The President.* I think it—I think it better represents the country. Also, I feel, sort of, a—at least a semiobligation as the President of the United States to be at the United Nations to deliver what will be an important speech.

*Q.* Would you still do it if the room was empty?

*The President.* Well, the room won't be empty. The room will have different people there and representatives of countries. But I can understand how it's, you know—it's very difficult for countries to be there. They won't be there only for that reason. They'd love to be there. I've already had people call. In fact, say—a couple of them—"I'd love to be there. If you want, I'll be there." I said, "Don't be there. You don't have to be there."

No, the room would be—I think the room will not be—although, there may be a spacing requirement like you have in this room. This room was always packed. This room would be packed again if we had the seats open. But you have a spacing requirement, so I understand that the United Nations, they may have that too.

Yes, please.

*Q.* Thank you, Mr. President. I have a question on the peace deal, but if you don't mind, could I defer my question to Emel Akan from Epoch Times.

*The President.* Sure. Yes. Please.

*Q.* Thank you. Thank you, Mr. President.

*The President.* Thank you.

### *Hong Kong/China*

*Q.* I would like to ask your opinion about what recently happened in Hong Kong, the recent attack on press freedom in Hong Kong. And Jimmy Lai was arrested; his newsroom was raided. What—how will the U.S. respond to this?

*The President.* Well, I think it's a terrible thing. But one thing that we have done—you know, we gave tremendous incentives to Hong Kong because of freedom. We want freedom. And we were giving tremendous economic incentives to Hong Kong. And we have now withdrawn all of those incentives, and it will be impossible for Hong Kong to compete with the United States with respect to that. It just won't be, because we've taken all of the incentives away.

If you look at China—with the World Trade Organization, as an example—they're getting tremendous, because they're considered a developing nation, which is ridiculous. Why should they be a developing nation, but we're not? And they get tremendous incentives.

We have—by the way, I told them it's unacceptable, and we've been doing that for a long time. They understand exactly how we feel, and big changes are being made. But with respect to Hong Kong, they get tremendous financial incentives so that they could do business and compete in the world.

We've now withdrawn all of those incentives. It's going to be very hard for Hong Kong to compete. And I will tell you that the United States—and I say this from any standpoint you want to hear it—will end up making a lot more money because of it. Because we lost a lot of business to Hong Kong. We made it very convenient for people to go there, for companies to go there. We've withdrawn all of that. And the United States will be a big beneficiary from an economic standpoint, but I hate to see what happened to Hong Kong, because freedom is a great thing.

Thank you all very much. Thank you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 5:27 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to Ryson B. Ellis, who was charged in with second-degree murder in the killing of LeGend Taliferro in Kansas City, MO, on June 29; 2020 Democratic Presidential candidate former Vice President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.; National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director Anthony S. Fauci; White House COVID-19 Pandemic Adviser Scott W. Atlas; White House Coronavirus Response Coordinator Deborah L. Birx; White House Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany; Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahayyan of Abu Dhabi, Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces of the United Arab Emirates; New York Democratic congressional candidate Suraj Patel; Thomas J. Fitton, president, Judicial Watch, Inc.; and John C. Eastman, Henry Salvatori Professor of Law and community service director, Chapman University. Reporters referred to Louis DeJoy, Postmaster General and Chief Executive Officer, U.S. Postal Service; National Economic Council Director Lawrence A. Kudlow; and entrepreneur and democracy activist Jimmy Lai.

*Categories:* Interviews With the News Media : News conferences :: August 13.

*Locations:* Washington, DC.

*Names:* Atlas, Scott W.; Barr, William P.; Biden, Joseph R., Jr.; Birx, Deborah L.; Eastman, John C.; Ellis, Ryson B.; Fauci, Anthony S.; Fitton, Thomas J.; Friedman, David M.; Harris, Kamala D.; Lighthizer, Robert E.; Maloney, Carolyn B.; McEnany, Kayleigh; Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahayyan of Abu Dhabi, Crown Prince; Netanyahu, Benjamin; Obama, Barack; Patel, Suraj; Pence, Michael R.

*Subjects:* China : Hong Kong, political status; China : Relations with U.S.; China : Trade agreement with U.S.; China : Trade with U.S.; Civil rights : Freedom of religion; Communications : News media :: Presidential interviews; Coronavirus pandemic, international cooperation efforts; Diseases : Coronavirus, domestic mortality rates; Diseases : Coronavirus, domestic prevention efforts; Economy, national : Improvement; Education : Schools, efforts to reopen; Elections : 2020 Presidential and congressional elections; Elections : Absentee ballot policies; Elections : Voter participation; Employment and unemployment : Unemployment rate; Europe : Coronavirus outbreak; Health and Human Services, Department of : Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Health and Human Services, Department of : National Institutes of Health; Health and medical care : Medical equipment and supplies; Health and medical care : Nursing homes and senior care facilities; Health and medical care : Research and development; Hong Kong, U.S. policy changes; Immigration and naturalization : Foreign nationals and refugees, U.S. admission policy; Israel : Prime Minister; Israel : Relations with United Arab Emirates; Israel : U.S. Ambassador; Israel : West Bank settlements; Justice, Department of : Attorney General; Justice, Department of : Bureau of Investigation, Federal; Law enforcement and crime : Gun violence, prevention efforts; Mexico : Border with U.S., infrastructure and security; Microsoft Corp; Middle East : Arab-Israeli conflict, peace process; Postal Service, U.S.; Russia : 2016 U.S. elections, interference; Taxation : Payroll tax cut; TikTok; Trade Representative, Office of the U.S.; United Arab Emirates : Abu Dhabi, Crown Prince; United Arab Emirates : Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces; United Arab Emirates : Relations with Israel; United Nations : General Assembly; White House Office : Assistants to the President :: Press Secretary; White House Office : Coronavirus Response Coordinator; White House Office : COVID–19 Pandemic Adviser; White House Office : Vice President; World Trade Organization.

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